



# FHA Weighs In On High Meadow As Memorial Site

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**Kendra Bobowick**

Noting some residents' "concern about use of the High Meadow" as a permanent 12/14 memorial location, Fairfield Hills Authority Chairman Thomas Connors on February 22 spoke about his board's role in the conversation. Although the authority has no "oversight of what happens — it's a town decision," he said, "we can make recommendations."

As the Fairfield Hills property stewards, he felt they had a right to "decide if the High Meadow is appropriate."

Mr Connors then welcomed the Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission (SHPMC) Chairman Kyle Lyddy. In past weeks the commission chose the High Meadow as its preferred location to establish a 12/14 memorial. His board has not yet revealed the project's scope. Although he had hoped "this would be a collaboration" with other town boards, Mr Lyddy said, "We have received some opposition." The SHPMC is looking at other possibilities, he said. "We're listening, considering alternatives to the space." He sees the struggle to "honor the land" and his commission's charge of "honoring victims."

Regarding recent tension between conservationists who do not want to see the open space compromised by what a memorial could potentially bring — a driveway, parking, structures — member Renata Adler on Monday said, "The last thing anyone wants is bitterness and if you continue, I think you'll have it."

To Mr Lyddy, member Phil Clark said, "The silent majority is with you; keep doing what you're doing."

Ross Carley was concerned about other open space in town.

"It sets a dangerous precedent of violating open space," he said.

Ms Adler said a memorial site could bring buses and tourists.

"Are you suggesting we stop our work?" Mr Lyddy asked her.

"If the families have their heart set on that location..." James Bernardi began, referring to the parents, siblings and other relatives of those killed on 12/14. Unlike past potential locations, the High Meadow saw no

opposition from any of the families. Several parents are on Mr Lyddy's commission, while he keeps in touch with others via e-mail, he said.

Mr Connor noted that Newtown's Land Use office had presented the site possibilities. Of the many sites SHPMC had assessed, he said, "Once we got to the final location [High Meadow] there was zero oppositions [from the families]," Mr Lyddy said.

"Seems you're much less open than you think you are," Ms Adler said.

"I think you're wrong," Mr Bernardi said. "Tragedy was suffered and this is what they want."

"There is a difference between what [Mr Lyddy] said and endorsement," Ms Adler responded.

"There is no opposition to this site," Mr Lyddy repeated.

"It's interesting that Land Use gave this to you as a spot. A cruel mistake," she said.

"There is so much more conversation to go on," Mr Connors said. "I think it's clear that lots more discussion needs to happen."